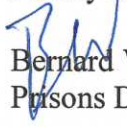




STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1100

December 22, 2010

TO: Family and Friends of Department of Corrections Offenders

FROM:  Bernard Warner, Director
Prisons Division

RE: McNeil Island Corrections Center closure

The changes due to budget reductions within the Department of Corrections over the past year have been high impact. I understand this and I am aware of the challenge that this creates for our staff, the men and women under our supervision, and yourselves.

We have struggled with many difficult decisions, and the guiding principal during these cuts has been what is best for public and facility safety. We have worked hard to maintain safety and reduce the budget by making the agency more efficient.

We recently announced that we will be closing McNeil Island Corrections Center (MICC), it is our most expensive facility to run. To offset the closure we will be adding 60 beds at Coyote Ridge in Eastern Washington and 240 beds at Larch in the Vancouver area. Even with the addition of this bed space, we will see a total loss statewide of about 212 minimum custody beds.

- The process of closing MICC will have far reaching impacts, and I want you and your loved ones to be aware of how you may be affected.
- Closer to home moves from Eastern Washington facilities to Western Washington facilities will take longer to accomplish due to the reduced bed capacity in Western Washington.
- Transfers from medium custody to minimum custody placement will be delayed until the MICC closure is completed.
- Visit rooms in multiple facilities will undergo a transition period when visitors and staff alike will be adjusting to changes and rules specific to those facilities. Processing may take longer, visit schedules may be impacted and visit rooms may be more crowded.

"Working Together for SAFE Communities"

McNeil Island Closure

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I understand that during this transition, the distance and delays may make it difficult to stay in contact with your loved ones. I expect that these problems will be temporary, as the overall population is decreasing and we aim to stabilize the movement as soon as possible. I ask that you practice compassion for other families and patience with our staff during this time. Please remember that many staff members are also being required to move due to the changes and closures.

I have said more than once that the families' voices need to be heard. I encourage you to help us be more effective and efficient in the way we do business. With your help, we can and will emerge from this difficult time better able to do better business.

Thank you for your understanding and I will keep you informed throughout the closure and movement process. If you have any questions, please contact the Family Services Unit at 360.725.8816.

BW/JM